



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

BARRON, CHIPPEWA, CLARK, DUNN, EAU CLAIRE, PEPIN, PIERCE, POLK, ST. CROIX

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The 2004 edition of the *County Workforce Profiles* are now available at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/oea>

Cooler temps usher in higher unemployment

Unemployment rates in West Central Wisconsin and the Eau Claire metropolitan area rose in November but rates from both areas remain lower than one year ago. The increase in unemployment in the region reflects the approach of winter and the job reductions that occur from mid-November through mid-March. In spite of the

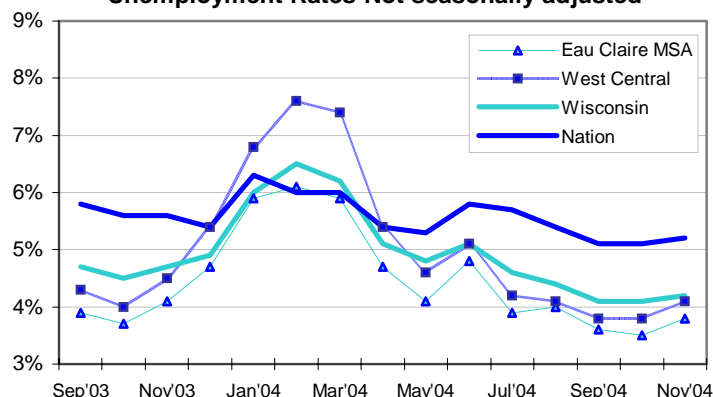
slow-down that accompanies the cooler weather the overall job market is in better shape this year than it has been for the last several years.

The unemployment rate in West Central Wisconsin was 4.1 percent in November up from 3.8 percent in October but lower than the 4.5 percent unemployment rate

of one year ago. The unemployment rate rose as the number of residents in the area with jobs declined and were added to the number of unemployed in the region. By mid-November there were 9,800 unemployed residents in West Central Wisconsin and 230,780 employed in a total labor force of 249,580.

The labor force in the Eau Claire-Chippewa metropolitan area in November was 89,900. That included 86,520 residents who were employed and 3,380 residents without jobs. The number of unemployed increased by 240 during the month and pushed the November unemployment rate in the metro area up to 3.8 percent, not seasonally adjusted. The November unemployment rate was higher than the October rate of 3.5 percent but was less than the 4.1 percent unemployment rate from twelve months earlier. Seasonally adjusted the metro unemployment rate in November dropped to 4.3 percent from October's rate of 4.5 percent.

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Sep'03	Oct'03	Nov'03	Sep'04	Oct'04	Nov'04
Eau Claire MSA	3.9%	3.7%	4.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.8%
West Central	4.3%	4.0%	4.5%	3.8%	3.8%	4.1%
Wisconsin	4.7%	4.5%	4.7%	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%
Nation	5.8%	5.6%	5.6%	5.1%	5.1%	5.2%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for West Central Wisconsin counties: November 2004

	Barron			Chippewa			Clark			Dunn			Eau Claire Co.		
	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03
Labor force	24,440	24,750	24,766	32,944	32,680	32,085	16,526	16,556	16,481	23,337	23,445	24,439	56,956	56,731	55,825
Employed	23,319	23,693	23,376	31,366	31,275	30,578	15,634	15,793	15,624	22,588	22,793	23,666	55,156	54,997	53,771
Unemployed	1,121	1,057	1,390	1,578	1,405	1,507	892	763	857	749	652	773	1,800	1,734	2,054
% unemployed	4.6	4.3	5.6	4.8	4.3	4.7	5.4	4.6	5.2	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.7

	Pepin			Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			West Central region		
	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03
Labor force	3,222	3,225	3,207	21,794	21,675	21,452	22,559	22,554	23,342	38,799	38,595	38,656	240,577	240,211	240,253
Employed	3,051	3,095	3,071	20,947	20,843	20,625	21,548	21,630	22,113	37,168	36,984	36,597	230,777	231,103	229,421
Unemployed	171	130	136	847	832	827	1,011	924	1,229	1,631	1,611	2,059	9,800	9,108	10,832
% unemployed	5.3	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.5	4.1	5.3	4.2	4.2	5.3	4.1	3.8	4.5

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for West Central Wisconsin: November 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Barron			Clark			Dunn			Pepin		
	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03
Total Nonfarm	21.5	21.8	21.4	10.3	10.4	10.1	16.0	16.0	16.8	2.2	2.2	2.2
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing	5.9	6.2	6.0	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Trade	3.5	3.5	3.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	2.9	2.8	2.8	0.5	0.5	0.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.6	1.7	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.6	1.5	0.2	0.3	0.2
Info/Prof. & Bus.Serv./Other	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total Government	4.7	4.7	4.6	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.6	3.5	4.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			Eau Claire MSA		
	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03	Nov '04	Oct '04	Nov '03
Total Nonfarm	10.9	10.9	10.5	14.3	14.3	14.7	27.6	27.7	26.8	80.4	80.1	78.5
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.9	2.0	1.8	3.7	3.8	3.4
Manufacturing	1.1	1.1	1.1	3.5	3.5	3.7	5.3	5.3	5.3	11.3	11.3	10.9
Trade	0.7	0.7	0.8	2.2	2.2	2.2	4.6	4.5	4.4	13.3	12.9	13.1
Transportation & Utilities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	2.9	2.9	2.9
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.2	1.1	3.7	3.7	3.7
Education & Health Services	1.2	1.2	1.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	12.8	12.8	12.6
Leisure & Hospitality	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.2	3.1	3.2	3.0	7.3	7.6	7.2
Information/Prof. & Bus.Serv.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.9	3.9	3.6	8.6	8.6	8.0
Other Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.9	3.9	3.9
Total Government	4.2	4.1	3.9	2.6	2.5	2.7	3.6	3.5	3.7	12.9	12.6	12.8

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

One reason the seasonally adjusted rate declined during the month is the strong end-of-year job growth in retail trade. Retail trade employers added 600 jobs in the metro area in October and November. The hiring surge at the end of the year compensates for some of the losses encountered earlier and brings the total number of retail jobs to 10,900, 100 higher than in November 2003.

The total number of nonfarm jobs in the metro area in November reached 80,400, the highest job count for the month on record. Employers in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties added 300 jobs during the month making the current job estimate 1,900 jobs greater than one year ago.

Employment in most industry sectors is better than one year ago and only construction and leisure and hospitality reported a loss of jobs in November. The loss of jobs in leisure and hospitality industries was

triggered by seasonal changes and reflected typical reductions for the month. The job loss in construction was also typical for November but follows two months of warm weather and strong employment.

Manufacturing jobs declined by 100 in each of the previous two months but were unchanged in November when two area manufacturing employers closed their doors. Lay offs from these firms occurred over several months and other employers in the area absorbed some workers. This is not necessarily the case for laid off workers in some of the neighboring counties.

In Barron County, there are nearly 100 fewer manufacturing jobs compared with last November and in Polk County there are 175 fewer jobs. However, in both counties the current number of total jobs is greater than one year ago and in both counties the unemployment rate is down from November 2003. In Barron County the

November unemployment rate of 4.6 percent is up from 4.3 percent unemployed in October but down from 5.6 percent twelve months earlier. In Polk County the current unemployment rate of 4.5 percent is down from 4.1 percent in October and from 5.3 percent one year earlier. Out of 72 counties in the State of Wisconsin 52 reported a higher unemployment rate during the month including eight of the nine counties in West Central Wisconsin. The unemployment rate in St. Croix County of 4.2 percent was unchanged from October.

There was a small increase in the number of unemployed in St. Croix County from 1,610 in October to 1,630 in November while the number of residents with jobs increased by 180. Retail trade employers in the county added 90 jobs in November but it was probably an increase in holiday workers in the Twin Cities that provided the additional jobs for residents.



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